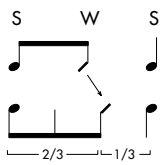


Ternary interpretation (swing)

Ternary interpretation principle

Binary rhythmic modes can be ternary interpreted by shifting the weak degree of their rhythmic cells to the next strong degree, producing a ternary cell, as shown below:

Ternary interpretation of binary cells

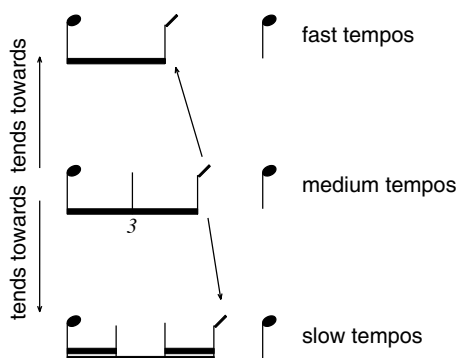


The weak degree (off-beat: W) is shifted to the next strong degree at a distance of $\frac{1}{3}$ of the beat, producing an implicit division of beat by 3. Rhythms ternary interpreted in this way have a bouncy, irregular character, with the off-beat no longer in the middle of the strong degrees. This is called swing or shuffle.

Swing rate

- ▶ well suited to medium tempos, this shift will be slightly reduced in fast tempos to avoid too abrupt, too angular rhythms, and to find roundness and flexibility in the rhythm,
- ▶ in slow tempos on the contrary, the offset will be slightly increased to give a little more angle and dynamics to rhythms that might seem a little too round and soft.
- ▶ the swing rate is thus variable according to the chosen tempo, and left to interpretation.

Swing rate representation



Ternary interpretation of rhythmic modes

The binary rhythmic modes with 1, 2 or 3 cells can be ternary interpreted, except for the 4-cell mode, which would induce an impractical division of the beats (12!).

Representation of ternary interpreted rhythmic modes

1 rhythmic cell 2 rhythmic cells 3 rhythmic cells

Ternary interpretation practice

We propose here the main rhythms of each rhythmic mode, and below the ternary version. Repeat the binary rhythm several times, then switch to the ternary equivalent. Alternate the 2 rhythms in an improvised way.

Ternary interpretation of the division by 2

Ternary interpretation of the division by 4

The rhythms are classified into 4 groups in order of decreasing stability (the strong degrees, support points, are gradually eliminated). The rhythms of groups 3 and 4 are the equivalent without the S degree (pulse) respectively of groups 1 and 2.

①

②

③

④

Ternary interpretation of the division by 6

We can take the rhythms below by eliminating the 1st degree (S or pulse).

By row, we have the rhythms with the same strong degrees; by column, the rhythms with the same weak degrees.

In summary, we obtain the binary modes, their ternary version and the ternary modes, represented in the table below.

General table of rhythmic modes

Cells number:	1	2	3	4
Binary modes	S W S	S W s W S	S W s W s W S	S W s W s W s W S
Swing modes				
Ternary modes	S w W S	S w W s w W S	S w W s w W s w W S	